

the same field of endeavor as the claimed invention. The purification of molten glass involves many different variables and problems than the treatment of wastewater involves. For instance, the temperatures, viscosities, surface tension, and reactivities of molten glass differ greatly from that of water. One consequence of the increased viscosity of molten glass involves the problem that small bubbles emitted during a short time interval join together and form larger bubbles. (Page 2, lines 15-24). In addition, other concerns, such as the solidification of molten glass on the porous body, present problems unfronted in wastewater treatment. Accordingly, one having ordinary skill in the art would not look to the treatment of wastewater in order to develop an apparatus that provides better purification of molten glass. For this reason, Tharp does not constitute prior art which can be relied upon in an obviousness rejection of the claims.

Moreover, there is no motivation or suggestion to modify the admitted art in the claimed manner. Nothing in Tharp provides a motivation or suggestion that pores having a diameter of less than 0.5 mm provide for better purification of molten glass. The treatment of wastewater and the purification of molten glass involve different chemical reactions and physical conditions.

In addition, the Examiner concedes that Thorp fails to teach pores having the claimed pore size. Thorp fails to provide any guidance on the determination of what size pores are best suited for the purification of molten glass. Again, given the different viscosities and chemical reactions which occur during the purification of molten glass, one would not reasonably expect to arrive at the claimed pore sizes through routine experimentation, especially since there was no motivation to reduce the pore size of the prior art devices.

Furthermore, there is no reason to believe that a device which produces fine bubbles in the treatment of wastewater would be capable of functioning in a molten glass environment. As previously stated, the solidification of molten glass and the resulting obstruction of pores presents a major problem in the purification of molten glass. This problem does not arise in the treatment of wastewater. Therefore, one having ordinary skill in the art would not reasonably expect a porous body used for wastewater treatment to similarly function in the completely different environment involved in the purification of molten glass. Thus, for at least these reasons, the Applicants respectfully contend that the Admitted Art in view of Tharp fails to render the claimed invention obvious.

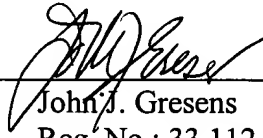
Claims 2-3 and 5-14 depend from claim 1. For at least the reason that these claims depend on an allowable base claim, Applicants respectfully contend the cited reference fails to render these claims obvious.

In view of the above, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the application in the form of a Notice of Allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: 3/11/04

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